



**U.S. Immigration
and Customs
Enforcement**

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News Release

ALIEN SMUGGLING ORGANIZATION TAKEN DOWN ON NORTHERN BORDER FROM JOINT U.S.-CANADA INVESTIGATION

Nine of those charged were apprehended in Canada; six are in custody in the U.S.

DETROIT — A joint investigation between U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE) and Canadian authorities resulted in an indictment that was unsealed today in Detroit federal court. The indictment charged 16 people with conspiracy to smuggle illegal aliens into the United States, and also with harboring and transporting illegal aliens within the United States. U.S. Attorney Stephen J. Murphy, Eastern District of Michigan, and ICE Detroit Special Agent-in-Charge Brian Moskowitz made the announcement today.

During today's joint U.S.-Canadian takedown of the smuggling organization, nine of those charged were arrested in Canada; five were arrested in the United States. One defendant, Salah Rashem, was already in U.S. Marshal Service custody. Another defendant, Hoa Ly, 42, of Macomb, Mich., is still at large. Canada-based defendants will first answer related Canadian charges before facing possible extradition to the United States.

"Alien smuggling organizations are driven by greed with little regard for the health, well being, dignity, or motivation of their human cargo," said Moskowitz, special agent-in-charge of the ICE Office of Investigations in Detroit. "Attacking and dismantling these criminal groups is critical to securing our borders and ensuring compliance with our immigration and customs laws. Smugglers should understand that we will not tolerate nor allow the U.S.-Canadian border to be used as an opportunity for them to profit from their crimes — rather we will use our shared border as an opportunity for our nations to work together to bring them to justice."

"The charges are based upon the interdiction of at least 74 illegal aliens smuggled into the United States by the conspiracy, and the more than 2,000 incriminating telephone conversations intercepted by the RCMP during the latter part of 2005," said U.S. Attorney Murphy. "This organization certainly posed a national security threat given the group's willingness to smuggle anyone into the United States for a price. This investigation, and the resulting charges, is an exemplary demonstration of the hand-in-glove professional relationship between U.S. and Canadian law enforcement on the Michigan/Ontario border, as well as the importance that the United States and

Canadian governments place on securing the northern border,” said Murphy. “I predict that the deterrent effect of this prosecution on other binational criminal organizations will be quite significant.”

In announcing the indictment, U.S. Attorney Murphy commended the work of ICE special agents, the U.S. Border Patrol, and the Royal Canadian Mounted Police (RCMP) in conducting the investigation. Members of the Integrated Border Enforcement Team (IBET) were also involved in coordinating this binational effort.

Criminal complaints were also unsealed charging two additional people, Duke Lumaj and Bianca Gagliano, with related conspiracy charges.

Assistant U.S. Attorney Kenneth R. Chadwell is prosecuting this case. The U.S. Customs and Border Protection (CBP), Border Patrol provided assistance. This is an ongoing investigation.

An indictment is only a charge and is not evidence of guilt. A defendant is entitled to a fair trial in which it will be the government’s burden to prove guilt beyond a reasonable doubt.

The defendants charged are:

Salah Rashem, 44, of Rockford, Ill.
Roko Berisic, 31, of Shelby Township, Mich.
Nosh Gogcaj, 34, of Macomb, Mich.
Maitham Aziz Alzehrani, 33, of Windsor, Ontario, Canada
Kola Bajraktari, 33, of Windsor, Ontario, Canada
Fran Gashaj, 40, of Windsor, Ontario, Canada
Han Huang, 43, of Albion, Mich.
*Hoa Ly, 42, of Macomb, Mich., * still at large
Zef Shpati, 40, of Windsor, Ontario, Canada
Dod Martini, 40, of Macomb, Mich.
Kathleen Voneitzen, 48, of Vicksburg, Mich.
Kai Zheng You, 40, of Toronto, Ontario, Canada
Duke Bracaj, 36, of Windsor, Ontario, Canada
Colin Price, 40, of Windsor, Ontario, Canada
Duke Lumaj, 33, of West Bloomfield, Mich.
Bianca Gaglianc, 24, of Windsor, Ontario, Canada

ICE

U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement was established in March 2003 as the largest investigative arm of the Department of Homeland Security. ICE is comprised of four integrated divisions that form a 21st century law enforcement agency with broad responsibilities for a number of key homeland security priorities.